

## Claims

- [c1] 1. A system for generating a cost estimate, the system configured to:  
receive input specifying at least one item to add to a cost estimate wherein a  
burden associated with the at least one item is automatically added to the cost  
estimate; and  
output a first value chain for the at least one item by the item's constituent  
component(s) and supply tier wherein the value chain includes an image and  
burden information for the at least one item and each of its constituent  
components.
- [c2] 2. The system of claim 1 additionally configured to output an embedded value  
chain associated with an item displayed in the first value chain wherein the  
embedded value chain is illustrated by supplier tier and includes an image and  
burden information for at least one item within the embedded value chain.
- [c3] 3. The system of claim 1 additionally configured to expand and decrease a level  
of detail for the burden information associated with the at least one item.
- [c4] 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the burden information associated with the at  
least one item includes design cost information.
- [c5] 5. The system of claim 1 wherein the burden information associated with the at  
least one item includes controls cost information.
- [c6] 6. The system of claim 1 additionally configured to receive input defining a  
labor rate structure used in calculating burden information for the cost  
estimate.
- [c7] 7. The system of claim 1 additionally configured to output the cost estimate in a  
format similar to a supplier's cost estimate format.
- [c8] 8. The system of claim 1 wherein the cost burdens associated with the items  
included in the cost estimate and value chain are populated based on a  
database of cost burdens.
- [c9] 9. The system of claim 8 wherein the cost burdens maintained within the

database are globally updated based on an index value which reflects fluctuations in market pricing for items included in the database.

- [c10] 10. The system of claim 9 wherein the index is calculated based on price fluctuations experienced in a subset of items generally representative of other items maintained in the database.
- [c11] 11. The system of claim 8 wherein the database of cost burdens include negotiated, best-in-class and off-the-shelf costs for at least one item.
- [c12] 12. A computer-implemented method for generating a cost estimate, the method comprising:  
receiving input specifying at least one item to add to a cost estimate wherein a burden associated with the at least one item is automatically added to the cost estimate; and  
outputting a first value chain for the at least one item by the item's constituent component(s) and corresponding supply tier wherein the value chain includes an image and burden information for the at least one item and each of its constituent components.
- [c13] 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising outputting an embedded value chain associated with an item displayed in the first value chain wherein the embedded value chain is illustrated by supplier tier and includes an image and burden information for at least one item within the embedded value chain.
- [c14] 14. The method of claim 12 further comprising expanding and decreasing a level of detail for the burden information associated with the at least one item.
- [c15] 15. The method of claim 12 additionally comprising globally adjusting the burden information based on an index value which reflects fluctuations in market pricing for the at least one item.
- [c16] 16. The method of claim 12 further comprising outputting the cost estimate in a format similar to a supplier's cost estimate format.
- [c17] 17. A method for negotiating a price for manufacturing tooling, the method comprising:

receiving a quote for a manufacturing tool from a manufacturing tool supplier;  
generating an estimate for the manufacturing tool wherein the estimate is  
generated electronically independent of the quote and in a format similar to the  
format of the quote;  
comparing the quote and the estimate to identify at least one unacceptable  
discrepancy in pricing; and  
during negotiation with the supplier, leveraging the supplier with a plurality of  
cost burden and value chain information corresponding to the manufacturing  
tool to reduce the at least one discrepancy in pricing wherein the plurality of  
cost burden and value chain information is provided electronically based on the  
cost estimate.

[c18] 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the estimate is generated electronically by  
a cost-estimating software application configured to present detailed burden  
information, a value chain and a plurality of images corresponding to the  
manufacturing tool.

[c19] 19. A system for generating a cost estimate, the system comprising:  
a means for specifying at least one item to add to a cost estimate wherein a  
burden associated with the at least one item is automatically added to the cost  
estimate; and  
a means for outputting a value chain for the at least one item by the item's  
constituent component(s) and corresponding supply tier wherein the value chain  
includes an image and burden information for the at least one item and each of  
its constituent component(s).

[c20] 20. The system of claim 19 additionally comprising a means for outputting the  
cost estimate in a format similar to a supplier's cost estimate format.

[c21] 21. The system of claim 19 additionally comprising a means for reducing and  
expanding a scope for the value chain.

[c22] 22. The system of claim 19 additionally comprising:  
a means for outputting a plurality of burdens associated with the at least one  
item; and

